

# Letters Letters Letters

Good grief! Who would write a BASIC program like that? In any reasonable BASIC (e.g. Applesoft) one would simply write the following line:

```
100 S = 2*(X - 3) - 1 : Y = Y + S : Z = Z + S
```

Jim Day  
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Granada Hills, CA 91344

## A DIFFERENT WAY TO 'FLOAT'

I read with interest Mark Zimmerman's article, "Snooping with Your PET," which contained floating point binary instructions (PC, Sept-Oct 1978).

Here is a slightly different version of your Program B:

```
10 V = 8194 - FRE (0)
20 INPUT X
30 N = N+7: Z = V: POKE 830,N
40 PRINT PEEK (Z); PEEK (Z+1); PEEK (Z+2);
   PEEK (Z+3); PEEK (Z+4)
50 END
```

Hope to see more of Mr. Zimmerman's articles.

Bob Feniger  
1081 B Treat Ave.  
San Francisco, CA 94110

## GETTING IT ALL TOGETHER IN FAIRFIELD, CALIFORNIA

Don't mind your change in name as long as the information keeps coming! Since the loss of *ROM*, yours is the only magazine that deals well with the philosophic and basic issues of computing. Keep those magazines coming!

I am a member of a non-profit organization in the Fairfield, California, area (halfway between San Francisco and Sacramento) called Synergetic Systems Utd. We formed our organization way back in 1972 to assist local residents in learning how to use—and not be used by—high technological tools. The tool we were involved with at the time was the Video Port-a-Pac. Since that time we have moved into the area of computers

and are presently planning a project with some similarities to the Community Memory Project and the Marin Computer Center. We hope to provide our community with a place where people can come to learn about the community, themselves, computers and other areas of interest.

For example: People who move into the area would hear from advertising (Welcome Wagon, word-of-mouth, etc.) that there is a place (storefront) in the community where they can find just about any kind of information they might need about the community and its resources, from the names of local doctors to listings of job opportunities and entertainment. To connect with this information, they would use a data management system (perhaps similar to "WHATSIT") running in a microcomputer. Not only would they be able to receive the information they need, but they would become *aware* of their potential when assisted by the use of the computer and other tools.

They will see others utilizing, enjoying, learning and controlling high technology tools: people playing Star Trek or Runequest, making video programs, learning to utilize cable television's "public access." For once they will be able to *talk back* to the boob tube. They will be able to learn how to program and use computers in their home or business—in an environment that is positive and non-threatening. If they are unable to find the information they need, the operators of the program will make every effort to find the answer and add it into the data base.

Citizens or government leaders will be able to run polls on local issues. (We are presently working on a simulation that will provide participants an experience of the dynamics that are involved in running a county government program.) There will be more involvement and sensitivity to the needs of the community by the leaders and those who elect them. Perhaps for once in their lives, people will

find they are not hindered by technology but *assisted*! They will be able to decide for themselves which direction they might want to go and utilize tools that will assist them in their quest.

Imagine having one place in each major community that operates like the "gatekeeper" of earlier days. Many government agencies that provide specialized information would become obsolete. In our county, for example, people needing information regarding alcohol or drug abuse services can call over eight different agencies and unless it is the agency that will help their specific problem, they will all get another phone number to call. With our center, all this information would be under one roof and phone number. Just imagine how this could and would begin to eliminate duplicated services. Imagine having a referral service in which doctors, lawyers, dentists, counselors, accountants, every sort of business can list their services in a format to their liking, including what they do, why they do it, what the normal costs are, and any other information they may want the prospective client to know. Sure beats the yellow pages, doesn't it?

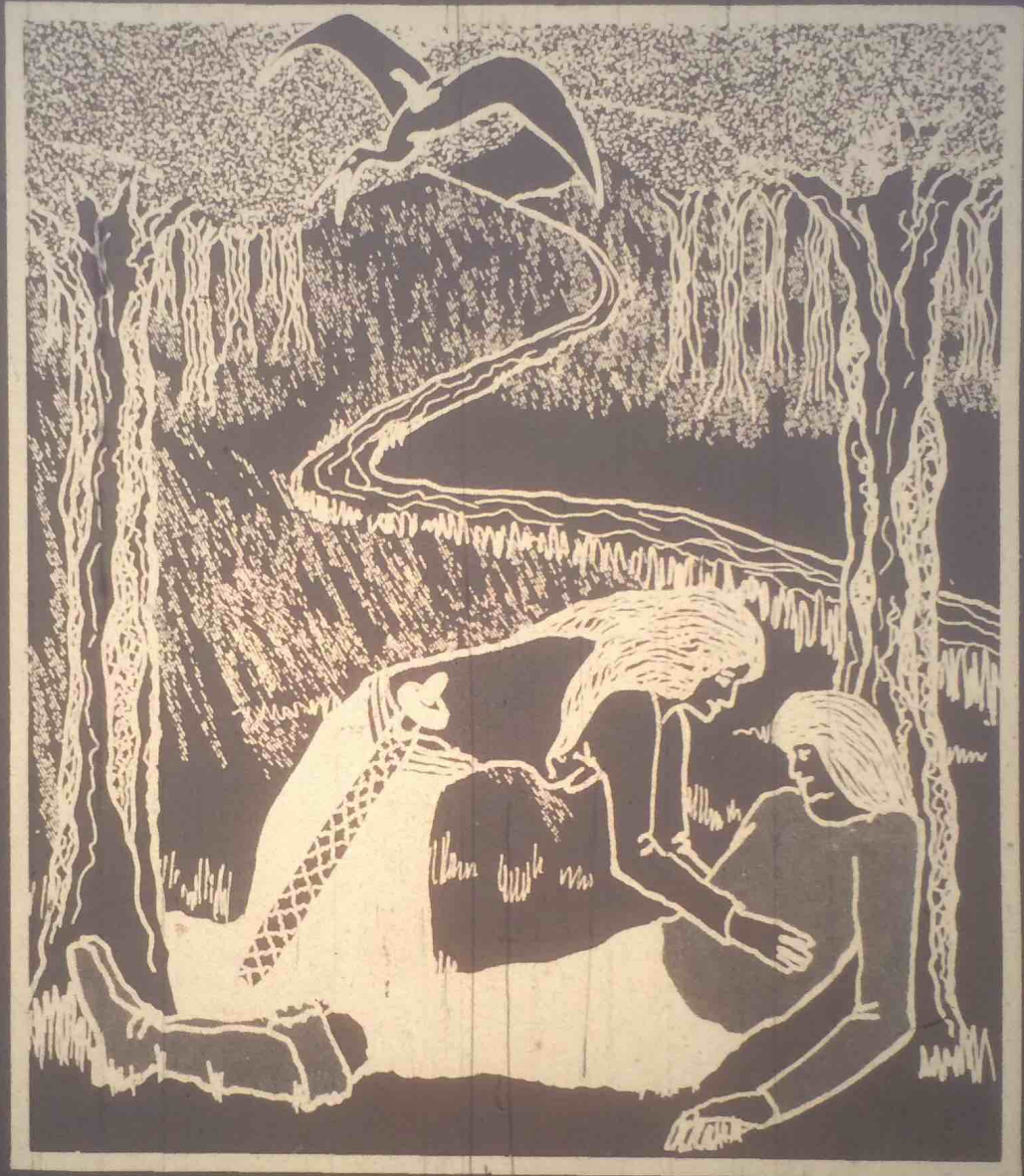
I know it sounds like utopian thinking, but I believe it is reachable (even if on a smaller scale than my dream). Currently we provide "hands-on" training to local youths and are involved in collecting "interest" and "skill" information from as many residents as we can to start a data base. We are currently writing a program that will assist us in determining what kinds of interests and skills are in the community, and after that we will start finding ways of connecting people with similar interests.

We would be more than happy to interact with others with similar ideas. If anyone can figure out a way to get "seed money" for a project like this, please contact us.

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# WHAT IS ALL THIS STUFF?



## Beginner's Guide to Fantasy Role-Playing



"What is all this stuff?" Yes, we've heard that more than once, as new RC readers, paging through the magazine, discover articles talking about fantasy lands, epic games, and role-playing; not to mention, abundant references to dragons. The following article, reprinted from the premier issue of *Different Worlds*, goes a long way toward answering that question. It is one of the clearest, most comprehensive explanations of fantasy role-playing (otherwise known as FRP) we've seen.

It should also give you an idea of why computer nuts are often attracted to this form of gaming. You want lots of variables and excitement and programs that "learn?" Well, consider the possibilities in FRP. For practical tips on how to apply a computer in the early stages of play, read the *Dragon's* comments in our continuing series on *Runequest*, which returns next issue.

*Different Worlds* is a new role-playing magazine from The CHAOSium (P.O. Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706). Subscriptions are \$9 for one year (six issues).

-LB

## BY CHARLIE KRANK

Few indeed are the days when someone hasn't come into the store and asked, "What is all this stuff?" What they were looking at are the miniature figures and the rule systems of fantasy and science-fiction role-playing games. The first of these was a fantasy game which began about five or six years ago called *Dungeons and Dragons*. Now, there are several very good systems on the market.

Well, I got so tired of trying to explain what all of this means (and only succeeding in making them even more confused), that I decided to write an article for those who have never even heard of role-playing. To do this in some sort of logical manner, I have broken the game down into its major components and begin with a definition of what Role-Playing is.

## THE DEFINITION

Role-Playing began as an attempt to capture the mystery and adventure of a fantasy world, such as Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. A place where magic not only exists but is an accepted practice and even a way of life. Imagine reliving Frodo's trek across Middle Earth or Elric's adventures with Moonglum in the Young Kingdoms. It is also an experiment in the interaction between people. One person (the referee) presents a situation complete with conflict and reward, and the others (the players) try to combine their talents to overcome the challenge and gain the reward. The conflicts usually tend to involve monsters or bad guys, but can also include riddles, traps or mazes. Though the rewards often are a form of treasure (gems, gold or magical items), they can be more abstract, such as solving that riddle, figuring out the trap or making it through the maze.

If the players survive the adventure, they have some method for the advancement of their characters—a form of growth process. As the characters advance, they experience an increase in their fighting skills usually accompanied by an increase in the amount of money found on adventures. Players will use this money to replace, improve or augment their equipment. In a complex world, they may also be required to buy food and lodging.

Role-Playing is not a competitive type of game like chess or the standard war-games, but is rather a cooperative effort on the part of the players to defeat the referee's monsters. Also, there is no true "win" in the game. Each adventure in the game builds on the one before, almost as if each adventure were a chapter in a book. If the player's character survives, he will participate in the next adventure with a more powerful character. If not, he must start over with a new character.

At this point, it may be helpful to look at just what the referee and players do in the game and how they go about resolving the conflicts.

## THE REFEREE

In any Role-Playing system, one person has the job of the referee, and serves several purposes. First, it is his responsibility to create the world in which all of the action in the game will take place. The complexity of this world can vary greatly. It can be as simple as a couple of rooms below a castle or as complex as a whole planet, complete with history, continents and a multitude of ongoing adventures.

It all depends on the referee's ambition and the amount of time available to work on it. One very popular time-saving device is to borrow a framework and history from some existing mythos. Of course one of the most popular is J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Other popular works include Howard's *Conan*, Moorcock's *Elric*, Le Guin's *Earthsea* trilogy and Leiber's *Lankhmar*. CHAOSium has its own fantastic world of *Glorantha*.

Once the referee has determined this structure, he then populates the different areas, be they dungeon rooms that he's drawn out on paper, or the wilderness areas located on his maps, with monsters. The term "monster" is used here and in many rules systems to indicate the animals, humans, and human-type creatures in the world. This would include, for example, the friendly Elven Magic User who, for a price, will show the adventurers out of the area they have gotten lost in.

Certain common-sense types of guidelines should influence the referee's placement of monsters. Large dragons, for instance, would need an immense room if they were not to feel cramped (remember that they do have to stretch their wings at times). Also, certain monsters just naturally do not get along well together. Just a little time spent considering these factors will add incredibly to the believability of play.

The next task of the referee is to place the treasure in his adventure. Usually, when a party runs into a room, almost gets killed, but does succeed in dispatching the monster, the group expects to find a good deal of treasure. I, however,

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find it more stimulating when the amount of booty is just enough to pay expenses until the next adventure and possibly replace or improve any weapons and armor.

This type of campaign style serves several purposes: first, it provides continued motivation to adventure; second, it vastly increases the value of plate mail and finely made weapons and, finally, it helps prevent the players from acquiring an arsenal of super-powered goodies and aids with which they breeze through hordes of baddies without the slightest danger to themselves. The final decision will be up to you, but keep in mind that part of the attraction of a game such as this is the struggle to survive and the uncertainty involved in accomplishing that survival.

A third purpose of the referee is to run all of those monsters which were so thoughtfully scattered about. This will be the closest you get to actually playing in your world. The more life that you can give to those beasts, the more enjoyable will be your game to the players. There will be many times that you will develop a kind of attachment to one of your human or inhuman monsters, but one cold, hard fact that every referee must face is that all your creatures will eventually die (that doesn't mean that they won't take an adventurer or two down with them, though). I'm not saying that you should go out and purposely kill off the characters, for if the players feel that that is your whole motivation, then they may stop playing in your world (and all of your work is down the tubes). Instead, a good referee will play the monsters so as to give the greatest challenge to the players. This will keep the game lively and interesting, and a good deal of fun for all parties involved.

A final purpose of the referee is to answer the multitude of questions that the players will ask. Some will be relatively easy, such as, "What are the chances of my character with a dexterity of 17 making a 10-foot jump onto the back of that orc?" Then will be the times when they ask, "Does a Protection from an Evil Spell apply to an animal who is instinctively protecting his territory from intruders? He may not necessarily be considered evil unless he was sent here purposely to harm us but . . ."

Simpler questions on ability can usually be resolved by a die roll. The more complex questions will require some judgment on your part. If you really cannot decide, the players always have suggestions, not all of which can be mentioned in public. You may want to listen to them, but the final decision will have to be yours. Remember also that what is good for the players is good for the monsters, and vice versa. As you become more experienced, you will find that your game will attain an individuality and style all its own and that the players will be eager to find out if they can master its murky depths.

### THE PLAYERS

Before the game starts, each beginning player will generate one or more characters who will participate in the adventure. Players who already have characters will just use the ones they have. Each rule system has its own prescribed method for this determination of characters, but they all have certain points in common. The first step will be to generate scores for certain characteristics, such as Strength, Intelligence, Power, Constitution, Dexterity and Charisma.

These scores will provide both an indication of how your character will act in certain situations, and help determine the profession he should follow. If your character has very good strength, for example, he will be a better fighter and will perform better in strength-related activities such as opening locked doors than someone whose abilities lie more in intelligence. The very intelligent character, on the other hand, will have more of a mastery of languages and spells. Both could accomplish the same end, but use different methods.

The next determination will be the assessment of the amount of damage that your character can take before he is killed. Many systems have this linked very closely with the constitution of the character. During the game, the player will have to keep a running total of his character's hit points. If these are exceeded, then the character is dead. It becomes, therefore, very important to protect your character as well as possible. One of the primary ways of doing this is to buy armor. First, though, you must have some amount of money.

The money with which you start the game can be determined in several ways. Some systems use tables showing different social classes and the probabilities for each, with the classes each having amounts of money available. Others use a simple die roll. However it is done, an amount of money will be allotted. With this, you must purchase weapons, armor (as mentioned above) and supplies. The choice of weapon will be basically up to you.

Some systems have restrictions based on character classes (occupations), social ranks or abilities. The different weapons will cost varying amounts of money and will do different amounts of damage. It is often a wise practice to carry more than one if possible, in case you happen to lose or break one. Armor may also have certain restrictions similar to weapons, but will be more influenced by your intended activities and pocket book. While plate mail will give you about the best protection around, it generally costs a great deal and is not ideal for swimmers. Conversely, the lighter forms of armor, leather and chain, allow a good deal more movement and silence, but don't afford as much protection.

Another use for money will be the purchase of accessory equipment. Unless you can see in the dark, as some races can, then torches are a good idea. Of course you will need to buy provisions and some sort of carrying device. Other things such as rope, stakes and mallet, flasks of oil and the like can also be very useful, but their purchase will have to depend on your monetary situation.

Also remember that money is good for the buying of services, repair of armor and weapons, bribing of officials and so forth.

If things are really tight, you could borrow from the town money-lender (at outrageous prices, of course), but remember that you should find at least a little treasure during the course of an adventure, so don't despair. Also, if your character survives the adventure, his fighting skills will develop. When he becomes good enough, he can begin to hire himself out. The number of ways in which money can be made (or acquired) are only limited by your imagination.



Throughout all of this, you will find that your character will become more and more a part of you. He will begin to develop a personality of his own, and increasingly, you will find that you play the character as an individual. This is the essence of Role-Playing, and one of the prime reasons why it has caught on in the past few years. You are able to live out your fantasies through your character, and his death could result in a real sense of loss.

## THE RULE SYSTEM

The most important part of any Role-Playing game is the rule system. At this moment, there are quite a few systems on the market. Here I will present only a few. In later articles, we will try to provide a more complete listing.

If you are more interested in fantasy Role-Playing, you might go to your store and look over these systems. From Tactical Studies Rules (TSR) comes the aforementioned *Dungeons and Dragons* and *Empire of the Petal Throne*. A group in Arizona called Flying Buffalo produces one of the more light-hearted systems, called *Tunnels and Trolls*, and for those of you interested in a good deal of historical accuracy concerning the Middle Ages, look at *Chivalry and Sorcery* from Fantasy Games Unlimited (FGU). FGU also makes a game based on the very popular novel *WaterShip Down*, a book about a rabbit society, named *Bunnies and Burrows*. Game Designers' Workshop has a game which also closely simulates the mood in the age of honor and chivalry called *En Garde*. Legacy Press manufactures *Legacy*, and CHAOSium recently brought forth *Runequest!*

For those of you more into the science-fiction type of adventure, consider *Metamorphosis Alpha*, a trip through a lost spaceship, by TSR. If you would rather run your own ship, give *Starships and Spacemen* by FGU a try, or even their *Flash Gordon* game. GDW makes another spaceship running game called *Traveller*, and Tyr Gamemakers makes an all-encompassing set of spaceship rules called *Spacequest*. If you always wanted to be a superhero, try *Superhero 44* from Lou Zocchi. Finally, if your interests lie more in the Wild West framework, look at *Boot Hill* by TSR or *Wild West* from Lou Zocchi.

When looking for a system to use, talk with the people at the store. They may be able to help you decide which system would best suit you. Then, go home and read the rules through several times before playing, or, better yet, try and find somebody who plays the rules. High schools and colleges are often good places to look.

Once you decide on a system, there are several ways to play. Some people like to play orally. The referee describes the rooms, and the players tell him what they are doing. I prefer to use little 25mm lead figures available in many game stores. They help both the players and the referee visualize the action and greatly aid in determining the distances between the players and the monsters. When using these miniatures, the referee will have to indicate the hallways and rooms of his scenarios. Any method is acceptable, be it toothpicks on a tabletop, chalk on a blackboard or grease pencil on plexiglass, as long as all players understand the scale and the system.

## THE RESULTS

Finally, there are several effects of becoming involved in Role-Playing. When I first began, I was buying any and everything that I could get my grubby little hands on (my father never could understand how you could spend so much money on just one game). As a result, I am now the proud owner of hundreds of miniature figures, and enough rule systems to start a small store. You will find yourself staying up to all hours of the night devising ways to subtly eliminate the players. All your free time will disappear, and you become very, very poor. Your games will last through one night and on into the next when you drop from exhaustion, only to awake and begin again. You can always tell a referee by the distinctly "undead" look about him. It's great!

## THE FINAL NOTE

If you have any questions or comments concerning a rule system or interpretation of rules, please send them in to *Different Worlds*, care of *Beginner's Brew*, P.O. Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706.

Many of the articles on FRP use various abbreviations that are hobby standards. The following is a list of the more common ones.

D4	a four-sided die
D6	a six-sided die
D8	an eight-sided die
D10	a ten-sided die (a twenty-die numbered one to ten twice)
D12	a twelve-sided die
D20	a twenty-sided die
D100	a roll of two D10s to produce random numbers from one to one hundred
D3	a roll of a D6 with results of 1-2=1, 3-4=2, and 5-6=3
3D6	a sum resulting from a roll of three D6s
10xD6	ten times a roll of D6
100x10D10	one hundred times a roll of 10D10
FRP	fantasy role-playing game
RPG	role-playing game
GM	gamemaster
DM	dungeon master
APA	Amateur Press Association

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publication is  
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# SOFTWARE REVIEWS FROM

## THE BEST OF THE PET GAZETTE

The PET Gazette, published six times a year, contains a wealth of information for PET users. It is FREE!! The address of the publication is 1929 Northport Dr., Room 6, Madison, WI 53704.

The Best of The PET Gazette for 1978 recently arrived, and it's a bargain (\$10) for all the information it contains. You'll find ads for PET products, software, reviews, programs and much more in the packed 96 pages. Len Lindsay, the editor, notes in the introduction that the BOTPG (Huh?!!) contains lots of reviews. He also reminds the reader that if the product is reviewed, then it exists... seems there have been problems with people advertising products that don't exist. Len cautions in his introduction: "Never order anything unless you know it exists! If it is reviewed in The Pet Gazette you can be sure it exists!" Sounds like good advice. With Len's permission, we have extracted several software reviews from the BOTPG. We only chose the reviews that gave products a high rating. Sort of a best of the BOTPG, so to speak... — RZ

**VIDEO CHECKERS** (No price listed)  
Compu-Quote  
6914 Berquist Ave.  
Canoga Park, CA 91307

While checkers is certainly not one of the world's most interesting or complex games, I do feel this program is excellent. It is truly a video checkers game; the board is POKEd, not PRINTed. In addition, pieces blink when they are moved, making the program easier to play. The program catches illegal moves and will force you to jump a piece if you can. It is the best checkers game I have ever seen. While it does not play a very good game of checkers, it plays better than most. If checkers is your game, then by all means, get this program. (NOTE: I'm impressed with the company—they recorded the program on both sides of the tape and provided fairly decent instructions. Other software vendors take note!)

Reviewed by Jon Staebell

**STAR FIGHTER/ASTEROID** (\$10)  
ZZYP Data Processing  
2313 Morningside  
Bryan, TX 77801

STAR FIGHTER is a STAR WARS simulation. The screen lights up with the sights of your laser gun. You steer your ship to get the enemy fighter in your sights and fire! If you hit the ship, it explodes in an amusing animated scene. In ASTEROID, you try to maneuver your space ship up through a group of horizontal moving asteroids. It is not easy to win, but not too discouraging. Again, if you're hit, there is an animated explosion. Both of these games are exciting, easy to use, graphic, and addictive. Best of all, complete documentation is included. AND, they even include a listing of the machine language program used to update the graphics quickly. WOW! A must buy...

**CASINO ROULETTE** (\$9.95)  
**CASINO CRAPS** (\$9.95)  
CMS  
5115 Menefee  
Dallas, TX 75227

**CASINO ROULETTE**  
This is a great version of roulette. It is designed not only to play the game but to teach it, just the way it is played in a casino. The documentation is complete in every detail.

The displays show the layout of the betting table, the 12 types of bets and their odds.

When you "spin" the wheel, an X moves from number to number on the betting table, stopping by the winning number.

The results of all the bets are shown and your purse is displayed. You then can play again or stop.

**CASINO CRAPS**  
This is the best version of craps we've seen. It has all the betting options of a real casino game. The documentation is extensive and not only tells what the different options are, but what the house odds are against you.

A tremendous game if you want to learn to play craps the way they do in casinos.

Reviewed by Bill Bendoritis

**MAXIT** (\$4.95)  
Harry J. Seal  
810 Garland Dr.  
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Here is an EXCELLENT number strategy game. You can play with another person or challenge the PET—but you will be surprised how well the PET can play. The object is to get the highest score. Each player alternates moves, picking a number and adding up the points. One player can only choose a square not yet taken in the same row as the marker for that turn; the other player can only choose a square in the same column as the marker. The results are interesting, especially at the end game. A good exercise for thinkers.

**SWORDQUEST** (No price listed)  
Fantasy Software Games  
P.O. Box 1683  
Madison, WI 53701

SWORDQUEST is the only fantasy simulation I have seen with graphics, animation and (soon) sound effects. The program itself is complex and has several machine language routines. It is well human engineered and easy to play—but also challenging and exciting. You wander about a maze of tunnels, trying to find the room\* with the treasure. You can kill any monsters with your arrows (except for Giant Spiders—they need a Magic Arrow to assure a kill). The maze of tunnels is always shown on your screen; there is no scrolling. All monsters are invisible until you come within 4 steps of them. They then appear and charge at you, moving 3 spaces each turn. You can do two things for your turn, including move, shoot an arrow, and change weapons. You must decide to carry either your bow or your sword. You must use your sword to fight any monster that attacks you. The intricacies of this game are explained in the accompanying manual. The manual also relates the background story to the game. An amazing aspect of this well designed game is that it is protected; you cannot make a duplicate copy. (Unauthorized copies are illegal anyway.)



# HUNT

## A New Class of Game

BY MICHAEL RICHTER

*Why not a game where you define the game? That is the question Michael proposed to himself and implemented for the PET. You don't have to know how to program. You don't have to have a totally clear idea of the game you wish to play. You can invent a version, discover flaws, correct, improve, re-invent; do all the interesting parts of the process and leave the programming behind.*

— RZ

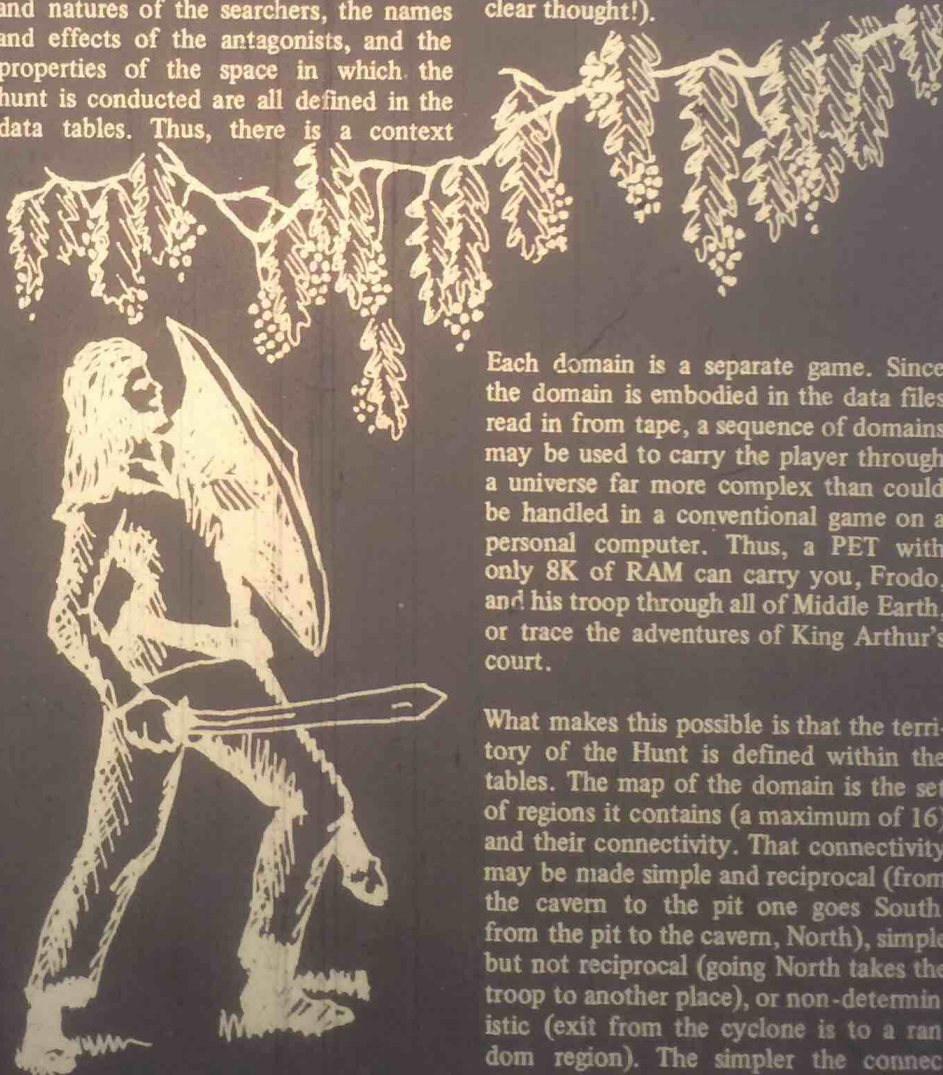
That definition is supported by an interactive program with substantial freedom. In Hunt, the context is established by the game-playing program and its associated interactive Huntwriter. The context is that of a search for a defined objective. The objective, the names and natures of the searchers, the names and effects of the antagonists, and the properties of the space in which the hunt is conducted are all defined in the data tables. Thus, there is a context

(Hunt) which may have a virtually infinite variety of domains (specific games) at the discretion of the game's author. And that authorship does not require knowledge of any computer language or adherence to the formalisms of programming (although it does demand clear thought!).

The use of games to exercise and occupy computers is virtually as old as computing itself. Most such computer games are variants of conventional games. Frequently, the principal difference is that the computer provides the opponent, so that a two-player game may be played alone.

The question may be asked: is there a meaningful class of computer game which has no conventional analogue? With Hunt, a prototype of such a concept is now available for the Commodore PET. It is written in Microsoft BASIC, so should be transferrable to other systems with little difficulty.

The concept underlying Hunt is that of a table-driven game. On the simplest level, the game is played with a set of data tables in the style of Quest, Dungeons and Dragons, Adventure, or any of a wide variety of both board and computer games. On the next level, that of a meta-game (in the sense of metaphysics or metamathematics), there is no conventional equivalent. Here, the player is defining the rules of the game, not merely playing it.



Each domain is a separate game. Since the domain is embodied in the data files read in from tape, a sequence of domains may be used to carry the player through a universe far more complex than could be handled in a conventional game on a personal computer. Thus, a PET with only 8K of RAM can carry you, Frodo, and his troop through all of Middle Earth, or trace the adventures of King Arthur's court.

What makes this possible is that the territory of the Hunt is defined within the tables. The map of the domain is the set of regions it contains (a maximum of 16) and their connectivity. That connectivity may be made simple and reciprocal (from the cavern to the pit one goes South, from the pit to the cavern, North), simple but not reciprocal (going North takes the troop to another place), or non-deterministic (exit from the cyclone is to a random region). The simpler the connectivity, the more trivial the game.



Philosophically, the concept of a meta-game offers several advantages beyond merely fitting a large problem into a small machine. Most important to the author, a level of computer involvement intermediate between playing a game and writing one is now available. The gap between the inventor of a self-designed game and its player is immense. To use a game to involve a non-programmer in

Oz, and other ideas. The objective is a treasure reachable with a simply connected route; success requires exit from the domain, and another simply connected route will get you out.

The complete game can be played by one who knows the domain in about five minutes; without a map, it may take 20 minutes. Because of the author's predisposition, no member of the party ever dies (or exits the game), and even random play will eventually succeed. Hunt itself has been human-engineered; Huntwriter is still relatively primitive.

Copies of the programs and Firstworld are available from the author for experimentation. After further checkout, they will be released more generally. To get a copy, please send your address, return postage and a suitable cassette to: 2600 Colby Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90064.

Finally, a third level of play is available but not implemented. The possibility of a meta-game for war is currently under investigation. With luck, we may have all of Doc Smith (to say nothing of Star Trek or Star Wars) running on a home computer of modest scale. Devising a new context is probably an effort left to the most experienced programmers, but among them it offers a significant challenge. (Note that at that level, the distinction between a meta-game and a simulation language is very slight—or non-existent!)

software is a painful process; but with a meta-game, there is an intermediate step that applies both logic and imagination, without demanding adherence to programming formalisms.

The parent and child can participate on both levels, challenging one another in a variety of ways. The potentials in education are also exciting: a class can be challenged to devise a game modeling the situation in a book. Each result can be played by all to evaluate fidelity to the book (or to history) and to assess the excitement of play. Oregon Trail, if a meta-game, would be equally applicable to space exploration and the Norman conquest!

The present status of Hunt and Huntwriter is that they are operational and several copies are in the field. One domain has been devised, called Firstworld, and others may be available soon. Firstworld is a confusion of Quest, Middle Earth,





# Reviews



**CHINA TRADESMAN: TAIPAN**  
Taipan TRS-80, Level II, 16K  
Cybernetics  
Box 40132  
San Francisco, CA 94140  
\$9.98

Tired of space wars? Hammurabi getting a bit old? Looking for a new thrill on your micro? Well, have we got a game for you!! Taipan—a simulation of a seagoing trader set in China in the middle 1800s.

The game is so intriguing that I played it for over six hours when I first received a copy. You start the simulation in the home port of Hong Kong. You are in debt; you have nothing in the bank. (Sounds real enough.) You do own a ship that is capable of carrying 50 units of cargo. There is a warehouse in which you can store excess goods.

There is a sometimes friendly money-lender who is prone to giving Buddhistic lectures on debt paying. You can borrow money from him to help get you going. Using the money, you are given the opportunity to buy cargo for the ship.

The trade goods are: general cargo, arms, silk and opium. At the beginning, because of your financial state, you must trade mostly in the first two items. As you acquire money, you can move up to the more costly goods. But, watch out!! As your cargo gets more expensive, you attract more pirates. Li Yuen, the chief pirate, can be found in Hong Kong upon occasion. He may ask for a donation to the temple. Refuse him at your own peril!

Once your ship is loaded, you set sail to one of several ports. There are storms, unspecified pirates and Li Yuen's pirates upon those treacherous waters. When you arrive in port, the prices for the goods you are carrying may be priced so low that you are forced to sail again. Meanwhile, your debts back in Hong Kong are accruing interest at an alarming rate.

I won't give away any more of the game. There are many surprises in the program that are best discovered by playing it. I mean, is it possible that Li Yuen could actually show up on the open sea and chase away a band of pirates that are attacking you?

Several adults have been at my home when my children were playing the game. They would often ask what it was that seemed to have the children so engrossed. The kids would usually be in the middle of a hot debate over the merits of buying silk or general cargo, for example. I know that there are two answers to that question: 1) It's a game, or 2) it's a simulation of a historical scenario that teaches them about tradeoffs. I always use the second response because I know that 1) I'm talking to an adult, and 2) I know what their next response is. They always ask how can that be possible!

At that point, I say sit down and try it. Four hours later... but you know the rest.

Reviewed by Ramon M. Zamora.



## TALE OF TWO TREKS

**Startrek-80**  
**Trek-78**  
**TRS-80, Level II, 16K**  
Farrell Enterprises  
P.O. Box 4392  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596  
\$9.98 each.

Clyde Farrell has a two-Trek offering that will bring your TRS-80 alive with Enterprises, Klingons and Romulans.

**Startrek-80** is an enhanced version of this classic simulation. There are short and long-range sensors, warp engines, photon torpedoes, phasors, an experimental death ray, a self-destruct option, damage control, supernovas, a complete galactic record and random events that cause or affect all of these items. As Clyde mentions in his program statement, there are events that occur so infrequently it may take you weeks to discover them.

The galaxy for the game is a set of 64 quadrants each divided into 64 sectors. The information on your "control screen" is well organized and enough is always visible so that the game can progress rapidly. If you are a Trek collector, this one is a must!

**Trek-78** is an "animated" version of the game that utilizes the graphics of the TRS-80. The ships of the various parties are drawn on the screen; each one distinctive. When a photon torpedo is fired, you see it travel across space. The Romulans move about and are hidden by a cloaking device. They are invisible, until they attempt to fire a phasor. Sometimes they are friends; sometimes not. They sometimes fire on Klingons.

When phasors are being fired, each ship that is being hit lights up with the "halo" of the energy field. When you move to a new quadrant, you watch as the Enterprise builds up to warp speed and then winks out of sight at the edge of the quadrant that is being left. Here again, an old favorite is re-created in a new and exciting way.

Just a note concerning Clyde's tapes. I successfully load all of his tapes at a volume setting of between six and seven. His tapes are only for a Level II TRS-80 with 16K of memory.

Reviewed by Ramon M. Zamora.

**TRS-80 TRON**  
**CLOAD Magazine**  
Box 1267  
Goleta, CA 93017  
\$36/year, \$3.50/issue

At the Computer Faire in Los Angeles last November, it was stated that more than 175,000 TRS-80 computers had been sold so far and that approximately 12,000 units were being manufactured and sold by Radio Shack each month.

As a TRS-80, Level II-16K owner, I have purchased many publications to find programs to run on my machine. There certainly is no lack of material, as a glance at the advertising sections of hobby computer publications shows.

One major lack in these publications, however, is reviews that tell the TRS-80 owner which programs are good, bad, or indifferent. Obviously, most new computer owners can't purchase all that is offered. And there's nothing more frustrating than discovering a cassette program—for which you paid anywhere from \$7.95 to \$20—to be third-rate. Or worse, a recopy of a program already owned but with a changed title.

To take the first step in solving this problem for TRS-80 users, I am starting a series of reviews. This first review deals with the TRS-80 cassette magazine **CLOAD**, issue #9, November 1978. I will review more recent issues of **CLOAD** in future articles.

**CLOAD** is an excellent magazine, published on cassette with a short newsletter included. Most programs are listed twice, in both Level I and II, and can be loaded with 4K, though there are some outstanding programs listed in Level II-16K which are not listed for Level I. If a tape will not load, **CLOAD** will send you another copy upon return of your defective cassette.

The price of \$3.50 (add 6% sales tax in California) for a single cassette—or \$36 for a one-year subscription—is probably the lowest price going for a series of software programs. Normally, there are five programs in Level II and four in Level I. There is an animated "cover," which is also a program. So the cost works out to approximately 60 cents per program.

**CLOAD** was experiencing some problems in duplicating their tapes. But publisher

Ralph McElory says that the problem has been licked, and **CLOAD** will be back on schedule shortly.

**CLOAD** is written by a number of programmers. There are six programs in this issue of **CLOAD**: **CLOAD** Cover, Instructions for Artillery, Artillery, Ohm's Law, Cat and Mouse, and Crushman.

The cover is visually interesting and an example of what the "new media" is likely to become. Artillery is slightly interesting and similar to formerly published games in *Kilobaud*. The main difference is the graphics and the use of side remarks. Ohm's Law is a good CAI (Computer Assisted Instruction) program for anyone just learning electronics. It is of minor interest if you are already proficient. Cat and Mouse has some problems and is not one of the better games **CLOAD** has published. Crushman is very similar to Hangman except there is an excellent graphic representation of an android within a box. This android will be crushed and buried if you make nine errors in guessing a random word. The words are fairly difficult, though you do have the choice of five levels of play. You can also change the words or enter new data if you desire. The graphics are very fast and many POKE statements are used. This is an excellent program and well worth the \$3.50 cost of the cassette. It will assist beginning programmers in using the POKE statements to list fast graphics on the TRS-80.

Reviewed by James F. Fouke  
El Granada, CA

*Next time we will look at CLOAD # 10, December 1978, plus other TRS-80 material. CLOAD # 10 has two programs, a four-color map problem and a name-the-states drill, that kids (and even teachers) would like.*

— RZ

## COMPUTERS: A FIRST BOOK

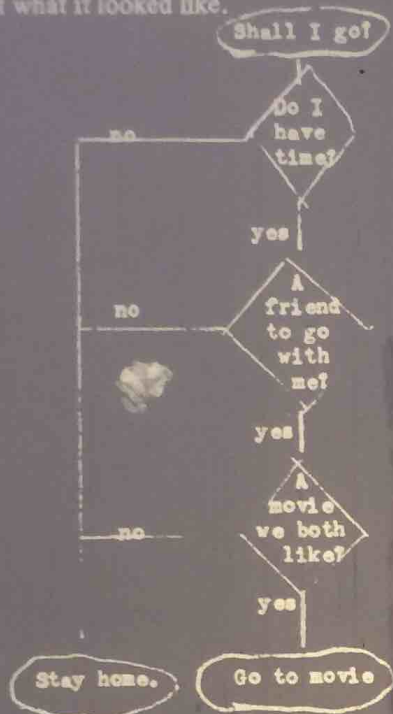
By Linda O'Brien  
Franklin Watts, 1973  
68 pp., \$4.90.

## BOOK REPORT

I have just finished a book on computers by Linda O'Brien. The book was called *Computers*. The book tells about the history of the computers and how computers are made. I didn't understand very much of it. I think it is too old for



me. I am almost 9 years old. Some of it that I did understand, I liked. I liked the part where it told how the computer thinks. The computer solves a problem by asking itself yes/no questions. There was a diagram about movies. This is sort of what it looked like.



I think the first part should be "will my mother let me?"

Reviewed by Suzanne Hofland, age 9  
Oak Knoll School, Menlo Park, CA

### BRING IN THE ORCS! Lord of the Rings: The Movie

Last issue we brought you three reviews of the movie "Lord of the Rings"—each written by a serious student of the literary trilogy. This time we present the reaction of a total Tolkien innocent. Susan Payette didn't know Gandalf from Gollum when she walked in the theater but, well, let her tell it . . . —LB

A friend of mine had a cat named Hobbit. It was the ugliest cat I had ever seen; a huge cat with large feet that had wild hairs sticking out in every direction. Having never read the Tolkien books, I never really appreciated that cat . . .

My appreciation finally came as a result of going to see *Lord of the Rings* with my friend Bob. I had protested that I probably wouldn't understand a thing about the movie. For I was one of those few people who had managed never to

buy, read, or analyze a Tolkien book. In my generation, it's akin to saying you never used Clearasil or watched "American Bandstand."

But, with reassurances that he would provide a running narrative as good as Howard Cosell, Bob and I went to see the movie.

As soon as we entered the popcorn-aroma lobby, I had a *deja-vu* feeling and could relate the experience to other times: going to a new school where everyone knew the location of the bathroom but you; singing dirty songs at Girl Scout camp and not knowing the words, but singing anyway . . . and so on. As we wove our way through the Tolkien aficionados in the lobby, I decided that even if I didn't understand the movie, it would help to rely on my usual fortifications of ice cream bon-bons and Pepsi. I had my first preview of what I had gotten into when I had to ask Bob who the person on the poster was that looked like a windblown Merlin. Bob patiently explained it was Gandalf the Wizard who would help Frodo the Hobbit.

The lights dimmed; I stuffed my cheeks with ice cream and we were off! The animation in the introduction was so realistic I found it hard to believe they were not using real people. Bob had done his homework and provided me with instant answers to all of my instant questions. Luckily, we went on an off night when 30, rather than 300, loyal Hobbiters were in the theater with us. I appreciated that when I first saw the Hobbits and had to ask, "Why do they have such big feet? Hairy feet?" Bob replied serenely, "Because they are Hobbits." I soon learned that this pronouncement was sort of a "what's-so" philosophy about Tolkien. I soon fell in love with Frodo (hairy feet and all), though I had trouble understanding why Frodo was quivering about the ring. I figured that if he put on the ring, all would be well. It wasn't until he finally did put the ring on that I realized its significance.

I didn't always understand what was going on, but I did start stereotyping the characters. I had Strider (Aragorn, son of Arathorn) as the Clint Eastwood of the bunch (and not bad at that!) I was glad to see that they included a Viking just for good measure, and of course a Fairy (Legolas).

I bit my knuckles along with everyone else when the orcs captured Merry and Pippin. When they were running to keep up with the orcs, I gently slid up to Bob and whispered, "See, if they didn't have those big hairy feet, they could keep up."

At times, the voices did not match the image I was seeing. This was especially apparent with Galadriel. She had such a beautiful voice and yet the homeliest eyes I have ever seen.

By the time we got to the battle at Helms Deep, I was hooked. I was on the edge of my seat as the battle started, cheering with the best of them. Especially for Strider (my Eastwood lookalike), hoping he wouldn't die—fantasizing about how I would revive him if he were other than animated! I relaxed as the battle was won. But then came that disturbing scene of my little friend, Frodo, sailing towards that sinister City of Doom. And was it my imagination, or was that ring getting heavier? The movie ended so suddenly, I felt incomplete.

Would Frodo live? Why was Gandalf wearing white? What was in the City of Doom? The whole movie suddenly seemed like a mirage in the desert of my mind.

Threading our way through the theatre lobby to leave, I had a sudden "ah-ha." Now I understood that Berkeley bumper sticker: "Frodo Lives!"

Reviewed by Susan Payette  
Mill Valley, CA





# DRAGONSMOKE

## BY THE DRAGON & FRIENDS

### FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION GAMES (and where to get 'em)

Archive Miniatures  
1111 S. Railroad Ave.  
San Mateo, CA 94402

*Star Rovers* (in preparation)

Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc. (FGU)  
P. O. Box 182  
Roslyn, NY 11576

*Chivalry and Sorcery (C&S)*  
*Bunnies and Burrows*  
*Flash Gordon & the Warriors of Mongo*  
*Starships and Spacemen*

Gamescience  
Lou Zocchi & Associates  
7604 Newton Dr.  
Biloxi, MS 39532

*Knights of the Round Table*  
*Space Patrol*  
*Superhero 2044*

TSR Hobbies, Inc. (TSR)  
P. O. Box 756  
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

*Dungeons and Dragons (D&D)*  
*Gamma World*  
*Empire of the Petal Throne (EPT)*  
*Metamorphosis Alpha (MA)*  
*Star Probe*  
*Star Empires*

Tyr Gamemakers Ltd.  
P. O. Box 414  
Arlington, VA 22210

*Space Quest*  
*Bushido*

Metagaming  
P. O. Box 15346  
Austin, TX 78761

*Monsters! Monsters! (MIMI)*

The CHAOSium  
P. O. Box 6302  
Albany, CA 94706

*RuneQuest (RQ)*

Flying Buffalo, Inc.  
P. O. Box 1467  
Scottsdale, AZ 85252

*Tunnels and Trolls (T&T)*  
*Starfaring*

Game Designers Workshop (GDW)  
203 North St.  
Normal, IL 61761

*En Garde!*  
*Traveller*

Legacy Press  
217 Harmon Rd.  
Camden, MI 49232

*Legacy*  
James E. Mathis  
2428 Ellsworth (#102)  
Berkeley, CA 94704

*Arduin Grimoire*  
*Welcome to Skull Tower*  
*Runes of Death*

Heritage Models, Inc.  
9840 Monroe Dr. (Bldg. 106)  
Dallas, TX 75220

*Star Trek*

### MAGAZINES

ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS (A&E)  
Lee Gold  
3965 Alla Rd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90066

THE DRAGON (TD)  
TSR Periodicals, Inc.  
P. O. Box 110  
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

THE SPACE GAMER (TSG)  
Metagaming  
P. O. Box 15346  
Austin, TX 78761

SORCERER'S APPRENTICE  
Flying Buffalo, Inc.  
P. O. Box 1467  
Scottsdale, AZ 85252

THE JUDGES GUILD JOURNAL (JGJ)  
and THE DUNGEONEER  
Judges Guild  
1165 N. University  
Decatur, IL 62526

THE LORDS OF CHAOS (LOC)  
Nicolai Shapero  
8885 Earhart Ave.  
Westchester, CA 90045

THE WHITE DWARF (WD)  
Games Workshop  
One Dalling Rd.  
Hammersmith, London W6 0JD  
England

THE WILD HUNT (TWH)  
Mark Swanson  
71 Beacon St.  
Arlington, MA 02174

WARGAMING  
Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc.  
P. O. Box 182  
Roslyn, NY 11576

*The above information was taken from  
the premier issue of a great new FRP  
magazine, Different Worlds, published  
by the CHAOSium.*

### HOBBY STORES

Our first list of hobby stores where  
you can see, touch and buy fantasy  
& science fiction games.

The Compleat Strategist  
11 East 33rd St.  
New York, NY 10016

CS&D  
731 S. University Blvd.  
Denver, CO 80209

Coulter Bennett, Ltd.  
12158 Hamlin St.  
North Hollywood, CA 91606

Gamemasters Hobbies  
4627 Geary Blvd.  
San Francisco, CA 94118

Games People Play  
1105 Massachusetts Ave.  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Lincoln Park Chess 'N Games  
2526 N. Lincoln Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60614

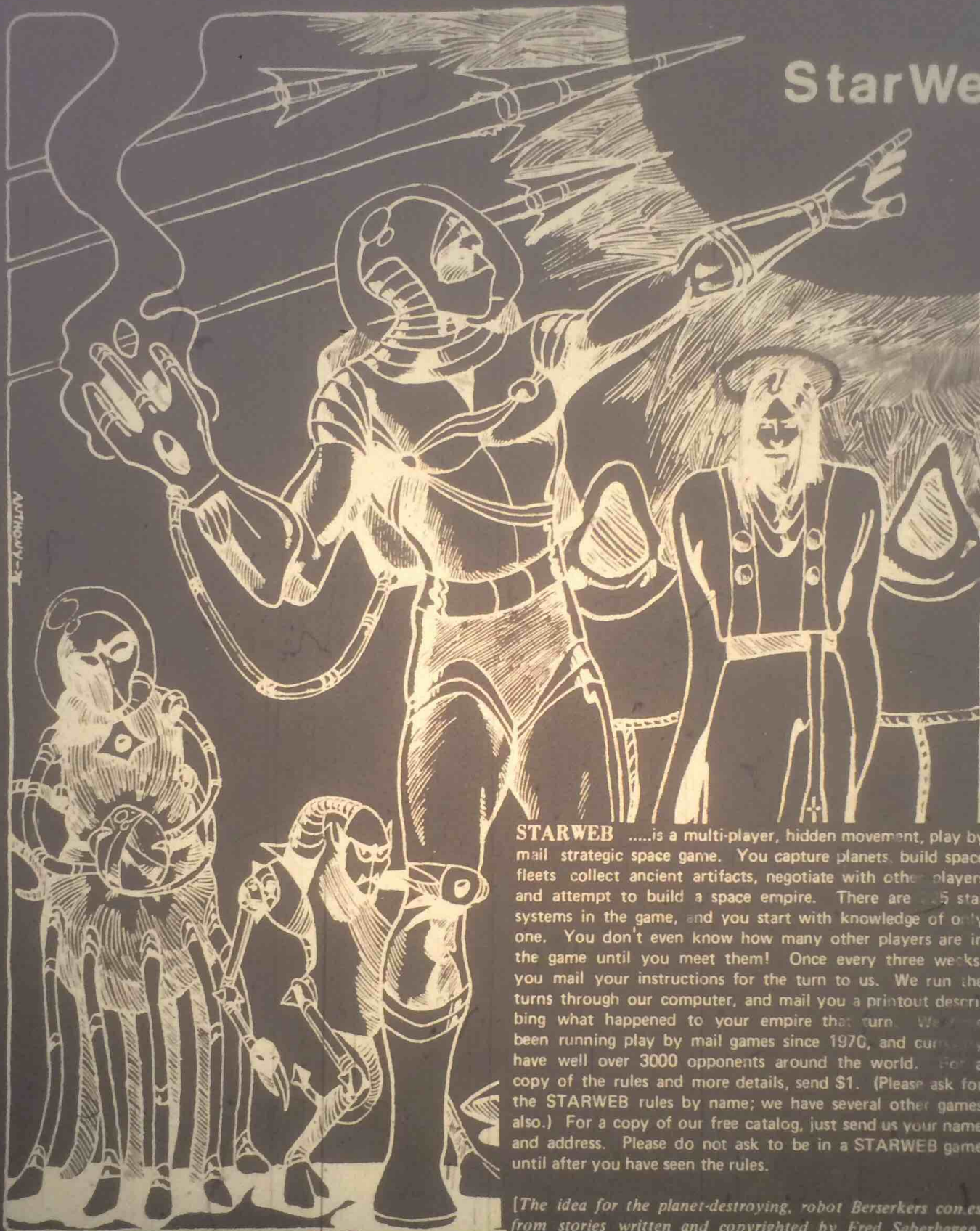
Nan's Toys & Games  
5015 Westheimer  
Houston, TX 77056

Outpost Hobbies  
224 California Dr.  
Burlingame, CA 94010

San Antonio Hobby Shop  
2550 W. El Camino  
Mountain View, CA 94040



# StarWeb



**STARWEB** .....is a multi-player, hidden movement, play by mail strategic space game. You capture planets, build space fleets, collect ancient artifacts, negotiate with other players and attempt to build a space empire. There are 25 star systems in the game, and you start with knowledge of only one. You don't even know how many other players are in the game until you meet them! Once every three weeks, you mail your instructions for the turn to us. We run the turns through our computer, and mail you a printout describing what happened to your empire that turn. We have been running play by mail games since 1970, and currently have well over 3000 opponents around the world. For a copy of the rules and more details, send \$1. (Please ask for the **STARWEB** rules by name; we have several other games also.) For a copy of our free catalog, just send us your name and address. Please do not ask to be in a **STARWEB** game until after you have seen the rules.

*[The idea for the planet-destroying, robot Berserkers comes from stories written and copyrighted by Fred Saberhagen, and is used with his permission.]*

Send to:  
Flying Buffalo Inc  
PO Box 1467  
Scottsdale, AZ 85252

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